The Stars and Stripes

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FRIDAY, APRIL 18, 1919.

BUDDIES

We hate to talk about ourselves.

We do, for a fact, despite the traditional willingness of the American to make known to the world the deeds of America. When it comes to handing laurels to our esteemed contemporaries we do it gladly, but where the A.E.F. is concerned we maintain a modest reticence.

Perhaps that is why the deeds of the Army nurses have not been duly chronicled in these columns. We have paid our compliments—every one of them well deserved—to the Red Cross, to the canteen workers, to all those noble women who have sacrificed the comforts of home for a precarious existence in a foreign land in wartime, and to whom we render all honors.

But of the Army nurse we have said little. Like the doughboy, she enlisted for her bit. She came into the service without desire for reward. She has rolled up her sleeves and toiled along with us. In short, she is one of us.

When everything is over and the inevitable fireside stories are born, there will come a time when the returned soldier will be recounting his experiences, and the girl who has been sitting there quietly will say, "Why, I was there, too. I was an Army nurse."

And then the man who went through it all will stretch forth his hand and say, "Shake, Buddy."

That is worth while.

LEST WE FORGET

Once upon a time—1917 to be exact, for this is not a fable—an American soldier in France cursed his lot. He was out of luck. All the things that you ever heard kicked about in the Army seemed to fall on him. Without a doubt, he was getting a rare deal, to speak conservatively of deals where some are very raw. He saw action and suffered a slight wound, to boot. He made it plain that while he had been glad to do his bit it was the last bit he would ever do. War was hell and any army was purgatory. Stop wars.

Then his luck changed. He was sent to Paris, where he got a soft job. He happened to have money of his own and he began enjoying life with a capital L. He forgot all about those seamy days. He began to talk about the glory of war. Germany ought to be licked again. This League of Nations was all poppycock. Exterminate the Germans, hurray for the flag—and pass the champagne.

Not every one in the Army had the tough row to hoe that the villain of this piece did in chapter one. Pretty near nobody had the snap he had in chapter two. But a lot of men that saw war and knew it for the hell it is have short memories. How many of them, safe over the draft age and high up in an office window, will lean out and wave the flag for the next generation to go off to battle and jeer down the people as weak-minded idealists who talk of peace by arbitration?

The best thing to do with that army grouch is to cash it in on some constructive support of a permanent peace machine.

S. O. L.

This Army of ours is composed exclusively of S.O.L.'s. Everybody says so; therefore, it must be true.

We can't get our fourth helping of goldfish, so we're S.O.L. We can't get more than one pair of russet shoes at a time, so we're S.O.L. We can't get a leave of two weeks any oftener than once in four months, so we're S.O.L.

It's a wonderful life. The poor, downtrodden soldier—admitting his poverty and down-troddenness—always has one privilege, that of kicking. It may not do him any good, but still he can kick. And why shouldn't he? Isn't he S.O.L.?

There are, of course, a few things we must pass over. We are one of the best paid armies in existence; we are one of the best supplied armies; we certainly come from the best nation; we have all sorts of hifalutin Sam Brownes worrying about where we shall sleep and what we shall eat and what we shall drink (and what we shan't) —and all that kind of thing. But, withal, we still insist on being S.O.L. It's our natural prerogative, and we enjoy it.

There once was an American soldier who went to heaven—oh, yes, of course, he got there AWOL. St. Peter offered him the freedom of the city.

"But," complained the Yank, "now that I've got a pass, there isn't a doggone M.P. in sight to challenge me."

S.O.L., as usual.

WHERE HE SHINES

To readers of the letters that have appeared on this page from time to time in recent weeks, it is probably apparent by now that the second lieutenant—to call him by the title given him in the I.D.R., G.O.'s and other fascinating documents—thinks that the Army, as a whole, doesn't take him seriously. He imagines that the expressions, "shavetail," "looey," "loot" and the like signify disparagement; whereas, on the contrary, they more often than not signify affection. Isn't that what nicknames are for? And who ever heard of a general being called "Gen" or "Old Full-Tail"?

But whether or not the Army takes him seriously—and it does most assuredly, by making R.T.O.'s and M.P. officers out of many of them—there is one place in the world where the second lieutenant more than comes into his own. That is between and on the covers of the magazines printed and distributed in the United States of America.

No self-respecting heroine, brain-daughter of a self-respecting short story writer, ever thinks of clinching in the last three paragraphs with anyone but a second lieutenant. No self-respecting mother, moreover, owns up to having anything less—or more—than a second lieutenant as her son. In the faery realms of fiction the glory of the proud and paunchy lieutenant colonel, the gray and gouty general, the harsh and crabbed but oh-so-upright top sergeant is as nothing. No fiction editor will consider a story which does not have for its hero the much-aggrieved, much put-upon, but none the less dapper—that's the word—and handsome shavetail.

The second looey's lot may be a bit hard over here—granted. With mere majors and captains ranking him out of his bed or his girl at every turn, it could hardly help being so. But when he gets home, preceded by the all compelling fiction barrage now being laid down in front of him, his conquest will be easy. And gosh. How he will enjoy it!

HELP! HELP!

After the earthquake, a voice, but neither still nor small. Indications multiply that with each returning troopship goes a species of soldiery easily flattered into assuming the mantle of oratory. It is now quite the mode, it is said, to open everything from a gathering of intellectuals in Faneuil Hall to a church club social with "a few words from one of the boys who has been over there."

Not long since at one of these meetings in Virginia the audience was treated to an unusually colorful portrayal of "actual war conditions" by one of the boys, who it later developed got all of his first-hand information with a pair of field glasses from a comfortable distance behind the lines. This young Demosthenes smilingly brushed aside all such things as cooties and mud as details and "went in for deeper things." So intense were his descriptions of the "guns that spat fire like great red dragons," the "red sea of silent bodies over which incessantly the troops moved forward," the "tumult and thunder pierced by the sharp cries and groans of dying men," and the "great hush that settled down over the field like the silent grief of Niobe," that "strong men trembled and women wept."

But it was in his peroration that he achieved his master stroke. From his place of great vantage he had not only commanded a picture of every detail of the battle, but he had been an eye witness of "men who went to their last long sleep like beasts caught in the great gun traps of a strange forest," told of how "they were stuffed away in shell holes with horses and mules," and concluded with the delicate thought that their "bright bodies were dark forever more."

The sooner the folks at home learn that the war neither made truthful men out of those of us who were liars nor orators out of those of us having merely the gift of gab, the better for all concerned.

DON'T WORRY—YET

A new kind of service flag is making its appearance in the States. It hasn't been very well standardized as to shape and design yet, but it contains stars, and each star represents a man in service. The flag is being flown by employers, and with it is frequently posted this information:

RETURNED SOLDIERS WORKING HERE.

Taking everything into consideration, the tone of recent news from the States as regards the attitude of employers toward returning soldiers is reassuring. It is a bold person who predicts what the economic condition will be in the United States during the next twelve-month or so, but it is apparently only a pessimist who paints the situation very black. Considering that the following headline was printed within two weeks after the division it was written about got back home, we can hardly get alarmed:

5,000 MEN OF —TH DIVISION WALK STREETS JOBLESS.

Maybe the 5,000 wanted to take a couple of weeks' rest.

EVER THINK OF IT

Some clever Englishman, commenting on French politeness, once remarked that, when a Frenchman bows, two-thirds of the bow is to himself. That may be true, and we have to admit that even the other third is quite a fraction more than most Anglo-Saxons offer.

Saluting is the same proposition. A snappy salute pulled by a buck to the most second of second lieutenants draws heavy interest; and the colonel who jerks his hand a few centimeters from his still affixed cigar is only insulting himself and the Army.

If some privates were a little more polite to themselves, the saluting trap would never be sprung and the joke would all be on the other side of the military fence.

"HOPING YOU ARE THE SAME"

The art of letter writing, as practiced in the A.E.F., is not one which grows easier with custom. Quite the contrary.

Filling four or five or more sheets was a simple matter one or two years back. It was not especially difficult six months back. And after the armistice and the almost unconditional surrender of the censorship the floodgates of personal news were opened with a vengeance. Documentary history began to flow westward in bulky bundles which, in transatlantic days, would have made drug clerks shrug their shoulders, squint at the scale, and politely suggest a couple of more cents' worth of stamps.

That era passed. The A.E.F. fairly wrote France out. There are people at home wearing gingham aprons and opening oven doors with them to see if the pie crust is burning who know the Rue Nationale at Tours or the viaduct at Chaumont or the Place Stanislaus at Nancy almost as well as they know Church Street and the Potter Memorial Library, all without ever leaving Homeville.

And now we still take our pen in hand, but what the hell is there to say?

The Army's Poets

SAMUEL BROWNE

(As Poe Might Rave.)

A heck of a long, long time ago,
In a dwelling in our town,
There lived a bird whom you may know,
By the name of Samuel Browne;
And when this guy was down-and-out,
To our house he'd come down.

I was a kid, and he was a kid,
And we used to chum aroun',
And half my clothes and half my dough
I gave to Samuel Browne;
And we loved with a love that was hard to beat,
Me and Samuel Browne.

But now on the street if we chance to meet,
Me and Samuel Browne,
He passes by, for he wears bars,
And a brand-new Samuel Browne;
But after the war, I'll get him a job,
Back in our old home town.

HOWARD A. HERTY,
Regtl. Sgt. Maj., M.P.C.

MOVIES

Last night
Me an' Ed
Went to the movies
An' they showed a picture
From home
It was one of them
"Smile Pictures."
The kind
Where you see
The home folks
An' it was took
In Paterson
An' I'm from Paterson
An' so is Ed
An' they showed
Lots of folks
From Paterson
An' all of a sudden
Ed shouted
An' jumped up,
An' waved his hands
'Cause there
On the screen
Was his ma
An' his sister,
An' he yelled:
"Hello, Ma"
The durn fool!

An' I almost yelled
"Hello, Helen!"
'Cause I know
Ed's sister
Gee!

G. A. C.

CLOUDS

Soon on soft, scented winds, death's fogs, I know,
From home and hill and wood will mount, and go,
Transformed as fair as clouds, into the dawn.
Not from a trench in France your dimmed, dead eyes,
Made clearer with a light, will see them blown
Far from this martyred land into the skies,
But, from a dell in that strange Paradise,
Over the hills of life where you have gone.

All day I watched them float, high in the blue,
Made beautiful by light. As clouds they rose
Over the hills, at noon, in hushed repose
There was a day, remember, I asked you
If life, through which men moved, and death, which goes
As winds through light from life, made men like those.

SGT. HARDWICKE NEVIL.

TO MY FIRST BUNKIE

(*Lieut. Walter Flato, killed in action, Flanders,* 1918.)

We're standin' at attention and our heads are holdin' high,
We're handin' out a real salute, Old Bunk, as you go by,
The captain's lookin' straight ahead, the column's awful still,
As the litter that's a carryin' you, goes creepin' up the hill.

The flag that's on the box you're in just makes our feelings worse,
'Cause it has the squeakin' litter lookin' mighty like a hearse.
And I'm wonderin' what you're thinkin' of the feelings of a guy,
As the litter that's carryin' you goes wheeling slowly by.

LLOYD M. THOMAS,
Lieut., Inf.

IN HEAVEN, TOO!

I wonder, is some special saint
Or angel detailed from above
To keep a record of the good
It does me to possess your love?

The work would be too much for one—
He'd have no time for harp and hymn—
I guess they run a roster on
The seraphim and cherubim.

J. L. D.

TO A PICCOLO

Little old man with cheek of tan,
Playing your piccolo hard as you can:
Playing in England, playing in France
Playing for sick men, playing to dance,
Playing for those who have gone to their rest,
Giving courage to those who have given their best,
Giving yourself and all you hold dear
To those who have need of your music and cheer.

THE PICCOLO'S WIFE.

STEVEDORE STEVE

Yassir! Dey calls me Stevedore Steve,
But mah name is Privit Brown.
Number 'Lebenteen hundred an' som'p'n
Dey got hit all writ down
On dis yer dawg-tag round' mah naik
Jest so's I can't fergit.
Hit's on ma surface record, too,
Whutever dey's done wid hit.

Dat surface record? Ah dunno.
Cap'n dunno, Kunnel dunno.
Ain't nobudy seed dat docymint
Fer sixteen mont's or mo'
Wish ter de Lawd dey'd find hit,
I'd sho have boo-coo franks—
Dollar a day, for sixteen mont's!
I could buy me a couple o' banks.

Dey had me in de Infantry
When I fust come acrost
But when I gits off dat steamboat
I nacherly gits phim lost.
I meets a meriatter, wid a red cap on
An' I ax about Company "D"
But dat fool nigger just wave his han's
An' he tell me "Jonnie Compree."

"I'se please ter meet you, Mister Compree,
But I didn't ax yo' name.
I ax you 'Whar is Company D?' "
But he answer jus de same:
"Johnnie Compree's pa'," so I bust him
Den dey tuck an' put me in jail
Wid a barb wire fence all round' hit
An nobody to go my bail.

An' de jedge—leastwise, de Kunnel,
He gin me sixty days
An three-thirds pay—or sum'p'n like dat
An told me ter mend my ways.
Wal, I get dem sixty days, all right
But her's whuts on ma min'
Ef I don't make no pay-days
How's I gwine pay dat fine?

But dey never did ax me fer hit,
An' when ma time wus up
Dey sont me down to St. Nazaire
Whar dey tells me, "You's out o' luck."
Well, mebbe I is, but I dunno.
I like dis place all right.
Plenty ter eat, and a place ter sleep
An' crap games ever' night.

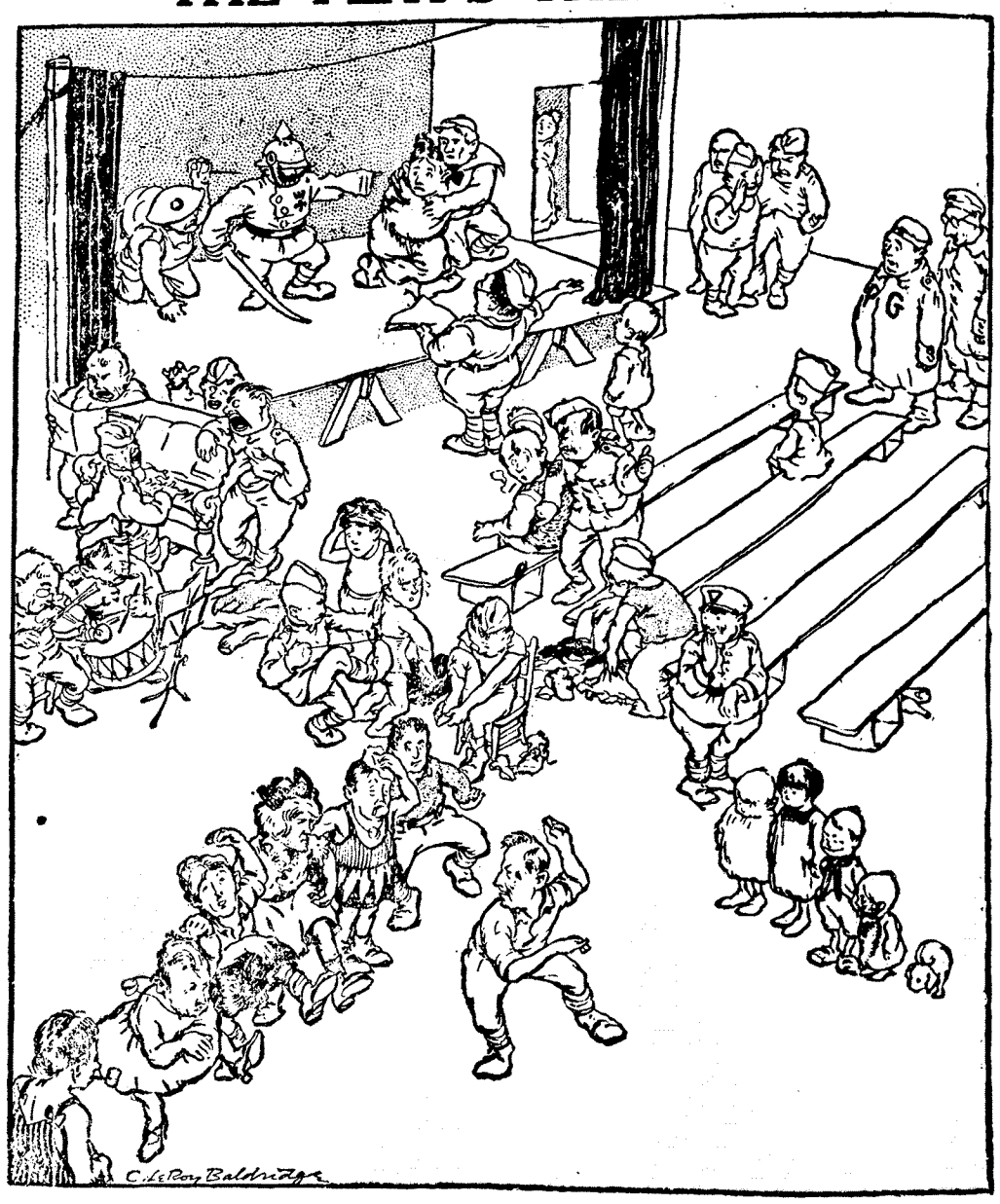
Whut does I keer fer pay days?
Dat don't worry me a-tall;
I just wallers in five-frank bills
More'n a mule kin haul.
I works all day for de Army
From reveille 'till taps,
An' after taps I works fer myself
Wif ma rabbit foot an' craps.

Dis rabbit foot is ginewine
Ketched in de dark o' de moon.
Grave yard rabbit! Lef' hin' foot!
Talk 'bout a lucky coon!
Water kain't drown me, razzer kain't cut me,
Bullets just pass me by.
An nobody livin' kin fade dem craps—
'Taint no use ter try.

Dey wus some No'then white man,
I'se heard the Cap'n tell,
I disremember whut's his name,
He 'low dat "War is Hell."
But as long as ma rabbit foot holes out
I don' never want ter leave.
Dis place don't look like Paradise
But hit's 'nough fer Stevedore Steve.

WILLIAM J. SMITH,
2nd Lieut., F.A.

"THE PLAY'S THE THING"



NOW, THE MESS SARGE

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:

Our collective friend, Louis H, having aired his grievances before the High Court of THE STARS AND STRIPES readers, I rise to defend that much slandered man who, with his sidekick, the supply sergeant, is popularly credited with enjoying mysterious and illegal sources of income at the company's expense. Why pick on the mess sergeant?

In the first place, who ever wanted to be a M.S. anyway? Very few, if any. After a few months' close association with beans and slumgullion in the making squads east sounds like a rare adventure. We don't even class with the M.P.'s—whoever heard of the query as to who won the war being answered, "The Mess Sergeants?"

The Q.M.C., in its infinite wisdom, issues macaroni, tin willie and goldfish. Not being an alchemist, the M.S. is unable to convert willie into fried chicken. But whom does the irate buck heap curses upon, when willie and beans arrive on his mess kit—the issuing Q.M., think you? Not by a deuce of a sight, as the Y song book would put it. "Dang that blinked belly-robber to Brest," he shouts, consigns W. and B. to the incinerator, and rushes out to spend his francs for pommes de terre in some vin rouge parlor.

They sigh for Mother's Cooking (capital letters and reverent voices), and lest the M.S. should fail to get the point, they hint that a nice mess of chicken, some sweet potatoes and ice cream sure would go good. Mother bought whatever the market offered, and cooked it for a family of, say six, assisted by Maggie, the female K.P.

In most cases the Q.M. plays the star and only part as market. It would be a poor compliment to mother under the circumstances if we could even approach her results.

But we try. We lose our appetites also upon the appearances of tin willie, so out of our sympathy comes the resolve to do a masterly job on that unloved commodity. We prepare it with onions, mould it, fry it—hamburger steak. (I almost wrote that humbugger steak.) Is the company fooled? Not so you could notice it. "What t'ell?" snorts the first buck in the line, "corn Billie again!"

So it goes, day after day, till even the hours from taps to reveille are filled with the ghosts of Willie and Goldie. Alone, friendless, cursed alike by the details under him and the company he serves, the mess sergeant passes his thankless days, belly-robber and camouflage artist being the mildest of the epitaphs he bears.

But he doesn't care. Like the martyrs of old, a power more than earthly sustains his drooping spirts. Lost in the rapt contemplation of the beauty and mystery of slum, his hours are passed in a state of exaltation that recks not of even a buck private.

ONE OF 'EM.

HOW MUCH?

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:

If the vote were put up to the A.E.F. as to whether we should drop out of the Peace Conference and let Europe set up the same old system over again, and have the A.E.F. sail back the next day, how many men would trade the chance of putting over what they enlisted to fight for for the selfish chance to get home?

I wonder. And I would like to hear more from some other people on that score. It is an open secret that President Wilson stands against the world in his attempt to put over a square deal for the world and what he calls the "common man."

How much is the common man, or the common soldier, willing to do for him? I don't believe he's willing to do even his bit.

PRIVATE GLOOM.

THEY'RE OFF!

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:

Would you be kind enough to print the following challenge to a formal debate in your next issue:

The American students at the University of Poitiers challenge American students at any other French university to a formal debate, subject and other necessary details to be arranged by correspondence.

Address all replies to

E. OSWALD DE TOLL,
8 Rue des Feuillants,
Poitiers, Vienne.

HEADLINES OF A YEAR AGO

From THE STARS AND STRIPES of April 19, 1918.

A.E.F. MEN CARRY $1,250,000,000 IN WAR POLICIES—Sales Made Under Fire—Officer Agents Do Business That Home Roosters Are Lucky to Get in Lifetime— Parties Travel Gypsy Style —Last Chance Spurt Takes Insurance Sellers to Every Part of France and Into England.

TWO BOCHE PLANES FELLED BY YANKEES—Clean and Quick Victories Scored by First American Trained Aviators—Card Game Has to Wait.

BASE CENSOR IS WISE TO ANYTHING YOU SAY—And If You Come in a Language He Isn't Hep To, He'll Find Someone Who Is—Right In This Man's Army.

FRECKLES IN FRANCE? THEY DON'T GROW 'EM—War Orphans Campaign Manager Falls Down on Important Order—Fifty Mascots Now Adopted in A.E.F.

POOR OLD FARMER LEADS HARD LIFE—Mr. Hoover Wants More Crops and Court Calls Cider Licker.

THANK YOU, SISTER!

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:

Because THE STARS AND STRIPES is our very own paper, we members of the A.E.F. family feel that we can find fault with it as well as feel grateful to it for all it does for us. That is why I venture to take exception to a few words in your recent editorial entitled "100 Per Cent."

In the name of the girl workers to whom you pay so wonderful a tribute, I want first to thank you with a full heart for words that must inspire us all to greater efforts still. Then I want to find fault—serious, grave, unmistakable fault—with one expression you have used. "the rough thoughtlessness of the soldier." Although assigned to duty with the French Army on the old front, it has been my privilege to serve also members of different American outfits that have come into this sector on duty or leave, and in Paris and elsewhere. I have also seen a great deal of the A.E.F. May I venture to amend your paragraph and to suggest that, after you have spoken (as you did) of the long hours, hard work and small rewards of the canteen workers, you should substitute for your final sentence the following:

"Yet they meet so often such thoughtfulness, protection and chivalrous consideration from the roughest soldiers that they cannot but feel it is a sufficient reward to be an American and a member of the A.E.F."

And when you say, "Thank you, sisters, after all that you have done for us," why, you are only proving my contention.

WHO GOT THE POMMES?

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:

Being a constant reader of your valuable paper, I would like you to tell me what has become of the big red apples which every member of the A.E.F. was to receive in return for the goldfish which was to be given to the French.

There is something wrong, 'cause we have been eating goldfish twice a day for the past three weeks.

Like the sparrow, we can't live on promises.

UN AUTRE BUCK.

ANY TAKERS?

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:

I have under my charge Sgt. Allen Raynor, of whom no doubt you have heard in dancing contests in the States, where he won several medals, especially the "Sea Twist." I would like you to publish this challenge:

Sergeant Raynor agrees to out-eat any man, black or white, in the A.E.F. Any one accepting this challenge can name the grub—either corn beef, eggs, beef or macaroni. He is also very fond of salmon and slum.

Will post forfeit for appearance.

JAMES E. PAUL, Manager,
Supply Co., 110th F.A.,
A.P.O. 765.

OH, COME, GEORGE!

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:

I would like very much to challenge the mail record of Cpl. W. L. McDonough, 104th Ammunition Train, 29th Division, on behalf of his buddy, in the issue of your most valuable paper of March 21, 1919.

Several years ago, when I was a member of G Troop, 1st Cavalry, station at Camp Stotsenburg, P. I., I had a bunkie (that is what we called them in the olden days), and we wrote to two girls who were in the "Look-Alike-Twin" Contest of the Boston Globe, and in some way the Boston Globe found out that these two young ladies had received letters from the far-off Philippines from two Beans, Crusaders. The editor naturally wanted to show the people who subscribed to that little small town paper how it was distributed all over the globe, and he willfully published the two letters.

Several weeks passed and then the mail began to arrive, and, having no Y.M.C.A. or Salvation Army huts in those days, free reading was at a premium. The troop commander and the commanding officer having become very much disgusted with the idea of having our regimental horses turned into draying horses for the use of delivering the mail to our company barracks, after waiting two years patiently, got mad and went back to the States.

Previously there had been only one transport per month to and from the Islands, but after one month 12,987 were pressed into service, which did not relieve the congestion. Consequently, President Roosevelt sent the big fleet around the world to deliver the letters that had been held up in New York City for a few days on account of same being poorly addressed. After six years' service in the Islands in three different outfits, we were informed by the Postmaster General, Washington, D. C., that no more mail would be delivered, on account of Congress having refused to appropriate $86,000,000,000 to buy compasses on the new mail boats. So we cabled back to deliver our mail to the leading paper mills of the country, which the said Postmaster General readily agreed to do.

The royalty on this salvaged paper for my part for the first year amounted to a little over enough to loan all the Allies more than enough to pay for their cost of the war, and the mail that we left in the Islands raised the Island of Luzon 57 feet. One shipment of mail, I might say, was wrecked and washed upon the shores of Hindenburg, and it enabled him to make bed sacks for 10,000,000 of his followers. I should have said "leavers," for, believe me, around Verdun there were some left. They might have been right in 1915, but they are left now. I alone donated the paper to the various organizations in France for the Allied soldiers to write their letters back.

People today wonder why Flagler built the Florida oversea railroad to Key West and why there are 1,272 double railroad tracks from Manila, P.I., to Camp Stotsenburg, P.I., and 7,000,000,000 people will wonder why in hell I have not been salvaged by a medical board for sanity.

Yours for another year or two in France.

GEORGE D. CARTER,
Co. A, 23rd Engrs
Rear Rank, No. 1.

"'RAUS" IS TOO MILD

To the Editor of THE STARS AND STRIPES:

The theater ticket speculator—those big fat guys whose hardest job during the war was getting five dollars, instead of four, for a two-dollar seat, and smoking long Havana cigars—are now waxing rich on the return of the soldiers from France. You recall when, while approaching a theater with your girl, they would say: "Very good seats down front in the orchestra; fine show." This call has since been modernized, and instead they are now yelling: "Get a grandstand seat to see the boys just back from war. Only ten dollars per seat."

Letters I have just received from New York state that these fat ticket speculators reaped quite a harvest from the sale of grandstand tickets for the 27th Division parade, and no doubt they will continue to do so when other divisions parade. What a mockery on the "boys" to have their relatives and friends or any one else pay to see them parade! What a sham local administration that will tolerate it!

'RAUS MIT 'EM.